



Kay Ivey
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES



Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw
COMMISSIONER

Sept. 28, 2017

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statewide events recognize success, contributions of workers with disabilities

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), will have 14 special events around the state as part of the October observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

The events will recognize and celebrate the successes and contributions of individuals with disabilities in the workforce and honor businesses that provide opportunities for successful employment for people with disabilities. The theme for this year is "Inclusion Drives Innovation."

"People with disabilities are some of the most innovative individuals you will ever meet," said Leslie Dawson, ADRS administrator for business relations. "They are solution-driven, and their solutions bring about innovative products and services and more efficient ways of doing their jobs. When you combine this drive with their skills, talents and abilities, it is easy to see how 'Inclusion Drives Innovation' in all aspects of business."

This year, awards will be presented in 12 different categories, saluting the accomplishments of employers, community partners, youth, educators, advocates, the news media, and local professionals. In total, 149 awards will be presented

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SERVING ALABAMA'S CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

at events throughout the state, with local winners competing for statewide recognition at a special event at the Capitol on Dec. 7.

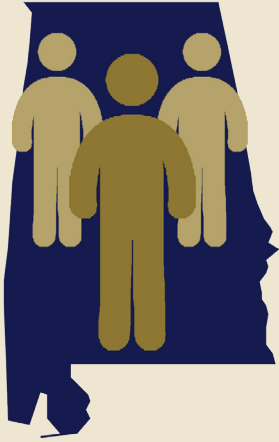
Former Gov. Jim Folsom created the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities in the late 1940s as a response to veterans with disabilities who returned home and were unable to find work. Since then, many individuals with disabilities – veterans as well as civilians – have benefitted from Governor's Committee activities. The committee coordinates a network of local volunteer groups throughout the state and works closely with ADRS staff to develop employment opportunities and raise awareness of the needs and rights of Alabamians with disabilities.

In fiscal year 2016, the department's Vocational Rehabilitation Service division provided services to 30,292 teens and adults with disabilities, assisting 4,607 of those in becoming successfully employed. Also in FY16, READI-Net, the department's business relations program, provided 7,148 no-cost services to 1,190 employers.

The mission of ADRS is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

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ALABAMA'S TALENT POOL

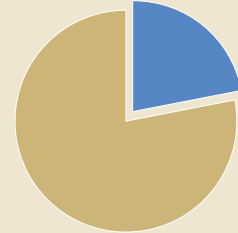


31.5%

percentage of Alabamians reporting some sort of disability, according to a 2013 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

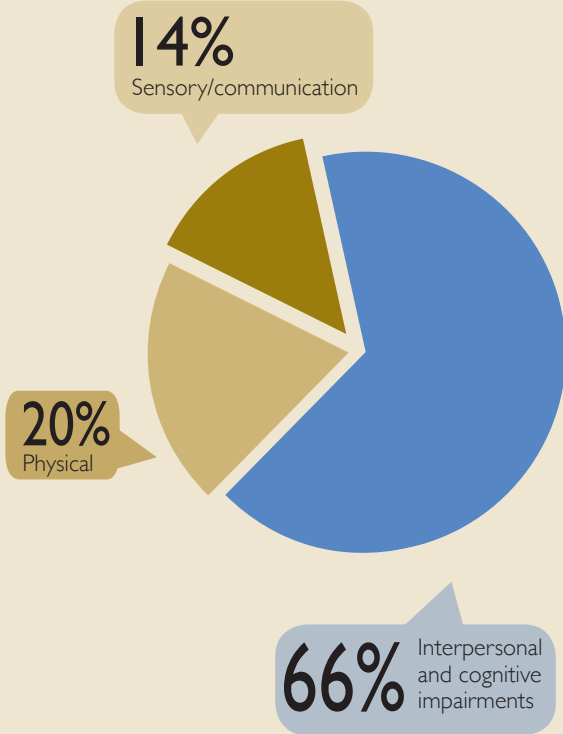
22.3%

Percentage of working age (21-64) Alabamians with a disability*

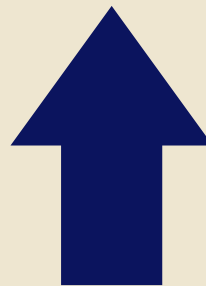


Source: American Community Survey

Types of Disabilities



* Source: Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services



29.5%

percentage of working-age people with disabilities who were employed in August 2017, up from 27.2% in August 2016

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Jobs Report

For more information:

www.alabamabln.org or 205-290-4457



The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of Disabilities is a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.



Proclamation

By the Governor of Alabama

WHEREAS, people with disabilities represent the largest minority in our state and nation and include every race, color, creed, national origin, age and gender reflecting the diversity of our state's workforce; and

WHEREAS, Alabamians with disabilities continue to make significant contributions to the economy of this state; and

WHEREAS, Alabamians with disabilities have performed successfully at every level of business and government, demonstrating their ability to play an integral role in our society; and

WHEREAS, various state programs promote greater public understanding and awareness of people with disabilities and their desire to have full-access to places of public accommodation; and

WHEREAS, Alabamians with disabilities have proven themselves to be productive, contributing workers, whose contributions far exceed the cost of their rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, employers statewide have recognized the worth and value of employees with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the support and cooperation of all people are needed to reduce the attitudinal and physical barriers that hinder full-acceptance of people with disabilities and their rightful place in employment:

NOW, THEREFORE, I Kay Ivey, Governor of the State of Alabama, do hereby proclaim October 2017, as

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

With the theme of Inclusion Drives Innovation

in the State of Alabama.



*Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the
Office of the Governor at the State Capitol in the
City of Montgomery on the 2nd day of October
2017.*

Kay Ivey

Kay Ivey, Governor

NDEAM 2017 *Award Categories*

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR-SMALL BUSINESS (Fewer than 50 employees)

This award is public recognition of an individual who has demonstrated personal courage, motivation, and outstanding performance in overcoming obstacles in his/her personal rehabilitation and for dedication shown in productive employment.

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR-LARGE BUSINESS (50 or more employees)

This award is public recognition of an individual who has demonstrated personal courage, motivation, and outstanding performance in overcoming obstacles in his/her personal rehabilitation and for dedication shown in productive employment.

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR-SMALL BUSINESS (Fewer than 50 employees)

This award is public recognition of a small business that has shown outstanding outreach, initiative, and performance in employment of people with disabilities.

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR-LARGE BUSINESS (50 or more employees)

This award is public recognition of a large business that has shown outstanding outreach, initiative, and performance in employment of people with disabilities.

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

This award is public recognition of an educator who has significantly contributed to students with disabilities and demonstrated an ongoing interest in people with disabilities.

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

This award is public recognition of an individual (such as a family member or volunteer) or rehabilitation professional who has demonstrated exceptional devotion to duty toward promoting self-advocacy, employment, and improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to a partner – such as a community service provider, state agency, business, organization or group – that has exhibited a strong commitment to activities resulting in greater alliances which benefit individuals with disabilities in employment-related activities.

MEDIA OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to a member of the media for continuing efforts to promote awareness of and to change attitudes toward people with disabilities.

PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

This award is presented to a local elected or appointed official for their exceptional contributions on matters affecting people with disabilities.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award is presented to a youth with a disability, age 15-22, who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, positive motivation and a willingness to participate in service to others.

STUDENT OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to a student with a disability, who has demonstrated exemplary efforts in pursuit of their education and in overcoming limitations related to their disability in doing so, and was a student in good standing during the fiscal year in which they are nominated.

COLLABORATION

This award is presented to an individual or a team that has demonstrated the true spirit of cooperation via collaborative resources and networking on initiatives that contribute to the employment of individuals with disabilities.